“Allah raises those of you who believe,
and those who were given knowledge many degrees,”
—58:11 Mujadala

“Whoever takes the path to knowledge,
Allah makes easy for him the path to Paradise,”
—narrated by Abu Dawud

“The angels lay down thier wings for the seeker of knowledge,
so pleased are they with what he does.”
—narrated by Abu Dawud

“To attend a gathering of knowledge
is better than praying one-thousand *rak'as*.”
—narrated by Ibn Maja

“The superiority of the scholars over the worshipper,
is as my superiority over the least of my Companions.”
—narrated by Tirmidhi

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How to Benefit from This Book

This book is meant to be your first grammar book. For this reason, we rely heavily on English translations and explanations so that the basic concepts become clear. In the future, however, it is better to rely on Arabic-only works such as *Al-Tuhfa Al-Saniyya*, which is an explanation of *Al-Ajrumiyya*, upon which this book is based. While the grammar elements of the book are in English, I have left the examples untranslated so that the student can begin the weaning process off of English. As for the titles, they are transliterated (Arabic in Latin letters) solely for ease of formatting.

The most importance concept to grasp at this level is declination, or *i'rab*, since it a novel concept to English-only speakers. The most important things to memorize are the charts, which are provided within the text with translations and examples and then again at the end without translations.

In the first line of al-Ajrumiyyah, ibn Ajurrum defines speech:

الْكَلَامُ: هُوَ اللَّفْظُ الْمُرَكَّبُ الْمُفِيدُ بِالْوَضَعِ.

A *lafz* is an utterance. Hence, the written word or the gesture is not referred to as speech.

Murakkab implies that it is connected. Hence, a single word by itself is not speech. A single word is known as a *kalima*, pl *kalimaat*. (The word *kalima* is also used to refer to a full speech or a sentence with a deep meaning, such as *kalimat al-tawhid*, which is the *shahada*.)

Mufid implies that the listener is not left waiting for more words. Hence, half a sentence like *Samih ate the*
would not be speech, since we remain waiting to hear what Samih ate. Prases like these are known as *ghayr mufid*, not beneficial. (Benefit here, does not refer to value, but rather to grammatical completeness.)

Bil wadʿ refers to *al-wadʿ al-ʿarabi*. Hence, speech in any other language is not considered kalam

The Components of Kalam

Next, he lists three types of words of which speech comprises:

وأَقْسَامُهُ ثَلَاثَة: اِسْمٌ، وَفِعْلٌ، وَحَرْفٌ جَاءَ لَمَعْنَى.

1 *ism* (noun), pl *asmaʾ*
2 *fiʿl* (verb), pl *afʿal*
3 *harf* (particle), pl *hurūf*

The *ism* is anything that has meaning in itself.

الْاِسْمُ كُلُّ مَا لَهُ مَعْنىً فِي نَفْسِهِ.

The *fi l* is anything that has meaning in itself and is connected to time (past, present, future or command)

الْفِعْلُ كُلُّ مَا لَهُ مَعْنىً فِي نَفْسِهِ مُتَّصِلٌ بِزَمَن.

The *harf* is that which has no meaning in itself, but lends meaning to another.

الْحَرْفُ مَا دَلَّ عَلَى مَعْنَى فِي غَيْرِهِ فِي نَفْسِهِ.

Indicators

فَالِاسْمُ يُعْرَفُ بِالْخَفْضِ وَالتَّنْوِينِ وَدُخُولِ الْأَلِفِ وَاللَّامِ وَحُرُوفِ الْخَفْضِ، وَهِيَ:

مِنْ، وَإِلَى، وَعَنْ، وَعَلَى، وَفِي، وَرُبَّ، وَالْبَاءُ، وَالْكَافُ، وَاللَّامُ، وَحُرُوفُ الْقَسَمِ،

وَهِيَ: الْوَاوُ، وَالْبَاءُ، وَالتَّاءُ.

The sign of an *ism* is that it can receive the grammatical case of *khafd* (marked with a *kasra* at the end of the word). Or that it can receive *tanwin*, or *al*-at its beginning, or be preceded by the *huruf al-khafd*, also known as prepositions: from, to, upon/about, on, in, perhaps, with, like, for, and the letters of swearing or giving oath, which are *waw*, *baa*, and *taa*. If a word has any of these signs, then it is an *ism*.

وَالفِعْلُ يُعْرَفُ بِقَدْ وَالسِّينِ وَسَوْفَ وَتَاءِ التَّأْنِيثِ السَّاكِنَةِ.

The sign of a verb is that it can receive the words *qad*, which indicates certainty when preceding a past tense verse (as in *qad qamat al-salat*), or speculation when preceding a present tense verb. Or that they are preceded by *seen* and *sawfa*, which shift a word from present tense to future tense. An example from the Quran is His saying, *kalla sawfa ta lamun* or *sayasla naran dhata lahab*.

Lastly, if the morphology of a word allows it to receive the feminine *taa* with a *sukun*, then it is a verb and not anything else. An example is again *qad qamat al-salat*.

وَالْحَرْفُ مَا لَا يَصْلُحُ مَعَهُ دَلِيلُ الِاسْمِ وَلَا دَلِيلُ الْفِعْلِ.

The *harf* is that which has neither of the above indicators.

A string of *kalimaat* that are *mufid* give us a *jumla*, which is a sentence. More on that will come in further chapters.

PART ONE
AL-ISM
الاسم

Every *ism* is subject to four factors: gender, number, definiteness (or not), and syntactic case, which is that the final letter of a word is altered based upon its part of speech. Subjects may receive a *damma*, for example, while objects may receive a *fatha*.

Lesson 1
Gender
المُذَكَّر والمُؤنَّث

The genders in each of Arabic, Shari'a, and lived life are two: masculine and feminine. Every word in Arabic is either of the two (some words are differed upon, being masculine in some dialects and feminine in others). The masculine configuration is the base form of an *ism*, while the feminine is marked with the suffix ـة *taa marbuta* most of the time.

Al-Mudhakkar (The Masculine)

Human beings, living creatures, countries, abstract, and concrete nouns can all beasculine. Feminine sounding names, titles, and plurals can be grammatically masculine, while being morphologically feminine. Here are some examples:

Masculine living creatures:

Imam (إمَام) leader *tabib* (طَبيب) doctor *katib* (كاتِب) scribe

Masculine non-rational nouns:

Jabal (جَبَل) mountain *dalil* (دَليل) proof *ʿaqd* (عَقد) contract

Cryptomasculine (feminine sounding) titles:

ʿallama (عَلّامَة) great scholar *khalifa* (خَليفَة)

Cryptomasculine (feminine sounding) plurals:

ikhwan (إخْوَة) brothers *talaba* (طَلَبَة) *kafara* (كَفَرَة)

Cryptomasculine (feminine sounding) proper names:

Usama (أُسَامَة) *Muʿāwiya* (مُعَاوِيَة) *Kharija* (خَارِجَة)

Al-Muʾnnath (The Feminine)

As for the feminine, it is also used for human beings, concrete nouns, abstract concepts, cities, and names of countries. However, it is also used for all cities, individual units, naturally ocurring classes, body parts that come in pairs, and non-Arabic words that end in *alif* or *taa marbuta*, such as 'delta' or 'cinema." All city names are treated as feminine because the word city itself, madina, is feminine. Most country names are feminine except for those that do not end in *alif* or *taa marbuta*. However, the feminine is not limited to that which ends with a *taa marbuta*. Examples below.

Feminine nouns:

waraqa (وَرَقَة) paper *shajara* (شَجَرَة) tree *safha* (صَفْحَة) page

Abstractions that are feminine:

al-iqama (الإقامة) *al-shajaʿa* (الشَجَاعَة) courage *al-sunniya* (السُّنِّيَّة) Sunnism

Nouns that donot end with *taa marbuta* but are feminine by nature:

umm (أُم) mother *ukht* (أُخْت) sister *bint* (بِنْت) girl *ʿarus* (عَرُس) bride

Cryptofeminine nouns:

nafs (نَفس) self/soul *nar* (نار) fire *shams* (شَمْس) sun *ard* (أرْض) earth

Many nouns are dual gender nouns, which become feminine by adding the *taa marbuta*. For example:

malik/a (مَلِك،مَلِك/ـة) king/queen *amir/a* (أمير/ة) prince/princess

A few nouns are differed upon amongst the Arabs regarding their gender. Some are:

ruh (رُوح) spirit *sama'* (سَماء) sky *lisan* (لِسان) tounge

haal (حال) *condition*

Lesson 2
Grammatical Numbers
مَفْرَدٌ، مُثَنَّى، جَمْعٌ

Al-Mufrad (The Singular)

Nouns are either singular, dual or plural, being three or more. The singular is the default and needs no discussion.

Al-Muthanna (The Dual)

The dual, or *al-muthanna* is marked by a suffix. However,unlike the feminine *taa marbuta*, the addition of this suffix is neither simple nor tidy. The dual suffix must interact with both the factors of gender and case, which we have yet to delve into. The gender factor inserts itself by adding a *taa* if the word is feminine. As for the cases, *raf'* (nominative) is marked with an *alif* for the dual, while *nasb* (accusative) and *khafd* (genetive) are marked by *fatha + yaa.* (The *nun* is additional.) Examples:

Masculine Singular	Dual *raf'* (nominative)	Dual in *nasb* or *khafd*
قَلَم *qalam* (pen)	قَلَمَانِ *qalaman*	قَلَمَيْن *qalamain*
رَجُل *rajul* (man)	رَجُلان *rajulan*	رَجُلَيْن rajulain
طَالِب *talib* (student)	طَالِبَان *taliban*	طَالِبَيْن *talibain*
شَيْخ *shaykh (old/revered man)*	شَيْخَان *shaykhan*	شَيْخَيْن *shaykhain*

Feminine Singular	Dual *rafʿ* (nominative)	Dual in *nasb* or *khafd*
اِمْرَأة *imraʾah* (woman)	اِمْرَئتَان imraʾtan	اِمْرَئتَيْن *imraʾtain*
رِسَالَة *risala* (message)	رِسَالَتَان *risalatan*	رِسَالَتَيْن *risalatain*
كَلِمَة *kalimah* (word)	كَلِمَتَان *kalimatan*	كَلِمَتَيْن *kalimatain*
وَرَقَة *waraqa* (paper)	وَرَقَتَان *waraqatan*	وَرَقَتَيْن *waraqatain*

Al-Jamʿ (The Plural)

Moving to the plural (*jamʿ*), its forms are known as perfect (*salim*) and broken (*taksir*). The perfect plural keeps the root intact and simply adds a suffix, which like the dual above, is subject to slight differences based on gender and case. The broken plural involves breaking the original root and not adding a suffix. The perfect masculine plural is marked by the addition of un (*oon*) or în (*een*). (Note that a word may be pluralized in more than one way.)

Jamʾ al-Mudhakkar al-Salim (Perfect Masculine Plural)

جَمْعُ المُذَكَّرِ السَّالِم

Singular مُفْرَد	*Rafʿ* (nominative case) *when used as a object or predicate*	*Nasb* (accusative) or *Khafd* (genetive)
مُسْلِم *muslim*	مُسْلِمُون	مُسْلِمِيْن

tawwab (oft-repentant) تَوَّاب	تَوَّابُون	تَوَّابِيْن
mutatahhir (purified) مُتَطَهِّر	مُتَطَهِّرُون	مُتَطَهِّرِيْن
mu'adhin (prayer caller) مُئذِّن	مُئذِّنُون	مُئذِّنِيْن

Jam' al-Mu'annath al-Salim (Perfect Feminine Plural)

جَمْعُ المُؤَنَّثِ السَّالِم

Singular مُفْرَد	*Raf'* (nominative case) *when used as a object or predicate*	*Nasb* (accusative) or *Khafd* (genetive)
muslimah مُسْلِمَة	مُسْلِمَاتٌ	مُسْلِمَاتٍ
tawwabah (oft-repentant) تَوَّابة	تَوَّابَاتٌ	تَوَّابَاتٍ
mutatahhirah (purified) مُتَطَهِّرة	مُتَطَهِّرَاتٌ	مُتَطَهِّرَاتٍ
'ābidah (worshipper) عَابِدَة	عَابِدَاتٌ	عَابِدَاتٍ

An example of these plurals in the Qur'ān comes from surat-at-Taḥrīm:

عَسٰى رَبُّهٗٓ اِنْ طَلَّقَكُنَّ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَهٗٓ اَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنْكُنَّ
مُسْلِمٰتٍ مُّؤْمِنٰتٍ قٰنِتٰتٍ تٰۤىِٕبٰتٍ عٰبِدٰتٍ سٰۤىِٕحٰتٍ ثَيِّبٰتٍ
وَّ اَبْكَارًا

Muslimat, *mu'minat*, *qanitat*, *ta'ibat*, *ʿabidat*, and saʾihat are all concrete nouns and descriptions and given the perfect plural *nasb* forms in the above verse. (They are given the *nasb* case in the form of a *kasra* because they are the objects of the sentence.) *Thayyib*, which is a previously married woman, is cryptofeminine in that it does not have the typical *taa marbuta* but due to its meaning it is deemed feminine and pluralizes as a perfect plural. *Bikr*, or virgin, is also deeme feminine by its meaning, not by a *taa marbuta*. However, it is a **broken plural**: a *hamza* is added the front and an *alif* to the middle. Broken plurals are given *nasb* with a *fatha*. All of these are indefinite and therefore, when they receive their *haraka* it is doubled.

Jamʾ al-Taksīr (Broken Plurals)

We now turn to the broken plural (*jam' al-taksir*), which entails the alteration of the word internally. This exists in English as well as in man/men, foot/feet, mouse/mice. In Arabic, broken plurals break in twenty-three different ways. The only way to predict what will pluralize as a broken plural is to familiarize oneself with them. Here are some of the more popular examples:

The addition of a *waw* in the middle of the word

right حَق حُقُوق

doubt شَك شُكُوك

king مَلِك مُلُوك

The addition of an *alif* with alteration of short vowels

man رَجُل رِجَال

mountain جَبَل جِبَال

The shifting of the *alif and movement* of short vowels

reciter قَارِئ قُرَّاء

worker عَامِل عُمَّال

student طَالِب طُلَّاب

The removal of the *taa marbuta*

nation أُمَّة أُمَم

sentence جُمْلَة جُمَل

room غُرْفَة غُرَف

The removal of a vowel

city مَدِيْنَة مُدُن

ship سَفِيْنَة سُفُن

book كِتَاب كُتُب

More removal of the *taa marbuta*

trial فِتَن فِتْنَة

team فِرَق فِرْقَة

story قِصَص قِصَّة

The removal of the *yaa* and addition of an [1]*alif maqsura*

sick مَرضى مَرِيْض

dead مَوْتى مَيِّت

killed قَتْلى قَتِيل

The addition of an *alif* in front and middle

body أَجْسَام جِسْم

dream أَحْلَام حِلْم

tower أَبْرَاج بُرْج

thing أَشْيَاء شَيء

door أَبْوَاب بَاب

holiday أَعْيَاد عِيْد

1. Alif Maqsura (الألف المقصورة), meaning "shortened alif", is a special Arabic letter written at the very end of a word as a dotless Yaa(ى).

Unique Cases

Certain nouns combine features from the perfect and the broken. The word remains fixed, but can only receive a suffix if an extra letter is added to the end of the word. A *waw*, *yaa*, or *haa* is inserted into the ending of the word to allow the suffix to latch on. For example: *salat* becomes *salawaat*, *sana* (year) becomes *sanawaat*, *dhikra* (memory) becomes *dhikrayaat*, *mustashfa* (hospital) becomes *mustashfayaat*, *umm* (mother) becomes *ummahaat*, and a non-Arabic word like *radyu* (radio) becomes *radyuhaat*.

More pages will be in the newer version of this pdf ʾIn shāʾ Allāh